

# Snap!VRS

## *Improving the VRS Calling Experience with the New Ojo Video Phone*



*By Richard Schatzberg*

**L**ast summer, Snap Telecommunications, Inc. received FCC certification to become a new VRS provider under the brand name Snap!VRS. Although it may appear that there are already a sizeable number of VRS providers, the approval of Snap!VRS marks the arrival of a great technological advancement in the emerging VRS industry. Well, at least that's what many of our deaf test participants told us during recent months of testing.

### **"The Ojo Is A 'Must' For Home!"**

Like other providers, Snap!VRS supports a world of social inclusion where all Deaf sign language users can easily communicate with each other and with the hearing world through video telephony anytime, anywhere and across any communication protocol. That's why Snap!VRS is dedicated to providing deaf sign language users with new leading-edge technologies from the video and IP telephony marketplace that bring this vision closer to reality.

To that end, Snap!VRS is pleased to announce that it will soon be distributing the much anticipated Ojo video phone, a stand-alone desktop appliance that provides a significantly improved VRS calling experience. Standing 14-inches tall and weighing only 4 pounds, Ojo provides an award-winning ergonomic and stylish design that has received rave reviews. In fact, Phil from New Jersey, one of our deaf test participants, claims, "The Ojo is a 'must' for home!"

The Ojo, manufactured and trademarked by WorldGate Communications, Inc. (NASDAQ: WGAT), is a mass-marketed personal video phone sold throughout the world. While hearing people around the world enjoy the Ojo for personal communication, Snap!VRS will soon provide it to VRS customers to use at no cost.

Yes, that's right. Snap!VRS will provide each deaf customer with a free Ojo video phone. But wait, there's more.

### **No More Televisions**

Ojo's unique design includes a 7-inch LCD display with a built-in eye-level camera and speakerphone. Its base has a plug for the power supply and another for the Internet connection. So this lightweight all-in-one video phone is small enough to fit on a desk and does not require a television like the Sorenson VP-100/200 or D-Link. As a result, Snap!VRS customers will be able to free up space and not have to negotiate a video call if it disrupts a television program. Plus, there is no need to buy a separate television altogether - helping to save money!

Because some VRS users are accustomed to using bulky TVs, they may think that the Ojo's screen is too small. After using the Ojo, our testers and interpreters feel differently.

Beth from Washington, DC stated "Originally I thought the video screen would be too small. I quickly realized that the screen size and camera position is perfectly suited for my sign space and communicating one-on-one in ASL. And the picture is so clear! Ojo is simply a better device for video communication."

### **What About Portability?**

Since there is no need for a television, Ojo is quite portable and can easily be transported in its carrying case. In contrast to other video phones that use H.323, the Ojo affords a plug-and-play setup in most locations where a suitable high-speed Internet connection exists because it uses a networking technology known as SIP, or Session Initiation Protocol. The philosophy behind SIP is one of simplicity. It simply works better than H.323 with other devices and applications and is more flexible and easier to install.

Even if a Sorenson VP-100/200 or D-Link user would want to haul a television around, the IP address would have to be reconfigured and communicated to prospective callers. But with Ojo, Snap!VRS customers will be able to easily use it in different rooms, at a friends' house across town, or even while on vacation without a hitch. No matter where Ojo is connected, the SIP technology will find it and remember its assigned 10-

digit telephone number. So just like the concept of receiving messages on a mobile PDA, a Snap!VRS customer will be able to place and receive Ojo video calls from just about anywhere.

### Experience True-to-Life Video Quality

If you are not yet convinced about Ojo based on its design and mobility, then you are sure to fall in love with its picture quality.

The Ojo uses a new video technology that allows for higher quality video at lower bandwidth during Ojo-to-Ojo calls. Over a high-speed Internet connection such as cable, DSL, or FiOS, Ojo delivers smooth video at 30 frames per second, the same as broadcast television. That means Snap!VRS customers will be able to enjoy true-to-life video quality with a clear and natural picture that makes it even easier than ever to see what another sign language user is saying.

So I guess that's why Margaret, one of our Deaf test participants from Wisconsin, was excited when she said, "Ojo's picture quality is clear...I love [the] new Ojo video phone better than any of the video phones that are out there!"

Yet, the Ojo will also deliver a rich calling experience over Internet connection speeds as low as 110kbps, which is about 20 percent the capacity of a typical high-speed connection. So this eliminates the need for Snap!VRS customers to buy more expensive business class or premium Internet service.

### Integrated Video Mail

Until now, it was a common practice for VRS users to review recorded sign language video mail sent by an interpreter via email when a hearing caller left a message. Although it could be reviewed remotely from the convenience of any computer, the concept of video mail was limiting in that it could not be accessed from the device itself nor did it allow for point-to-point messages if a Deaf person wanted to leave a sign language message for another Deaf person.

Thanks to the Ojo video phone, Snap!VRS customers will enjoy the convenience of built-in video mail from within the device itself. Ojo contains up to 20 minutes of storage capacity and users can easily access and view the video mail from the main menu screen.



The Snap!VRS Ojo Video Phone

Additionally, Snap!VRS customers will benefit from other features of the Ojo video phone that create an improved personal connection with others. For example, Ojo includes a picture caller ID for quick visual call identity and the ability to record a personal sign language video greeting to prompt callers to leave a video message. Also, Ojo includes a picture ID phonebook with up to 100 entries. We have added a flasher along with Ojo, to let you know when you have an incoming call.

### "It is Worth the Wait"

Since Snap!VRS received its FCC certification last Summer, I have been asked numerous times when the Company will begin distributing Ojo video phones and launch its video relay services. I am optimistic that it won't be much longer and can only ask for your continued patience, as the Ojo will be available as soon as the testing is complete and Snap!VRS is satisfied that it will provide a high quality service. However, I think we're getting close, as Edwin, a Deaf test participant from Pennsylvania says, "It's great to have us Deaf people [take] part of the testing group that is helping make a wonderful service for the Deaf community."

In recent months, Snap!VRS has also been committed to developing an E-911 solution and is working hard to make the Ojo video phone technology work with other VRS providers. Since the Ojo uses the newest technology, Snap!VRS has some additional work to do. But according to Margaret from Wisconsin, "It is worth the wait!"

If you or someone you know is interested in applying to Snap!VRS, the Company is currently accepting applications, which may be submitted online at [www.snapvrs.com](http://www.snapvrs.com). All applicants will receive periodic status updates via email.

### We Cherish Our Interpreters!

Without our wonderful interpreters, Snap!VRS would never be a great VRS provider. We employ only the best interpreters. James from Maryland agrees. "The interpreters are wonderful, and I can see them clearly with the Ojo. Thanks for offering a service that will benefit Deaf people."

### Friends and Family Benefit Too

Additionally, any friends or family members who are not eligible for Snap!VRS may also benefit from the Ojo experience as well. The Ojo may be purchased online at [www.snapvrs.com](http://www.snapvrs.com) for as low as \$299.99. After purchasing it, customers will need to subscribe to Ojo Services for \$14.95 / month and activate the phone by calling WorldGate Communications.

We look forward to launching Snap!VRS very soon and to serving the Deaf community for many years to come. Speak with you soon via Ojo!

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*Richard Schatzberg is the founder and CEO of Aequus Technologies, Corp. ([www.aequustechnologies.com](http://www.aequustechnologies.com)), the parent company of Snap Telecommunications, Inc. He is the former Senior Vice President of Sales and Marketing of NeST Technologies, a global information technology firm; Richard has served on various boards, including his current appointment as a board member of the Abilities Fund, a non-profit organization committed on a national basis to the economic advancement of people with disabilities and devoted to the fullest expression of their entrepreneurial spirit.*